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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4280
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000257

SIPDIS

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DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
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STATE PASS TO USAID FOR J. HARMON AND L. DOBBINS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/26/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: MDC ON LAND SEIZURES, POLITICS

Classified By: CDA Katherine Dhanani for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

MDC Minister of State

¶11. (C) Gorden Moyo is the Minister of State in Prime Minister Tsvangirai's office. He serves as a chief of staff for Tsvangirai, helping to coordinate MDC policy and serving as a liaison with ZANU-PF. Moyo offered us his observations March 26 on land seizures and the political situation.

¶12. (C) According to Moyo, a "fiery" debate took place at the Cabinet meeting on March 24 with the MDC asserting that farm invasions were occurring and should stop, and that white farmers were being illegally evicted. Leading the MDC charge were Moyo, Minister of Finance Tendai Biti, Minister of Information Communications Technology Nelson Chamisa, and Minister of Home Affairs Giles Mutsekwa. Although most ZANU-PF ministers, led by Minister of Justice Patrick Chinamasa pushed back and argued that legal processes were being followed and that there was no need for action, Vice President Joice Mujuru and Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development Nicholas Goche sided with the MDC. Mujuru said the invasions and evictions would have a negative effect on the winter wheat crop. Goche was concerned that violations of Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion (BIPPA) agreements through the seizure of foreign-owned farms would adversely impact Zimbabwe's foreign relations.

¶13. (C) Ultimately, Mugabe and Cabinet agreed to refer the issue to the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) for documentation of specific violations, and also to initiate a farm audit. Government principals Mugabe, Tsvangirai, and Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara will meet March 30 on the land issue. The MDC will demand that Mugabe issue a public statement condemning the invasions and ordering that they cease. If Mugabe does not do so, the MDC will ask for the intervention of SADC.

¶14. (C) Turning to the political economy, Moyo said inability to pay civil servant salaries and at the same time meet

recurring expenditures and make capital investments was crippling the government and weakening the MDC. He said payment in forex of February salaries had been credited to the MDC and, demonstrating it could produce, had given it leverage with ZANU-PF. Government was now in a financial squeeze. It had been unable to fully pay March salaries and the potential inability to pay fuel and energy bills could soon result in petrol shortages and increased power outages. As a result, Moyo opined, the MDC had lost its leverage as ZANU-PF (or at least the hardliners) sat on the sidelines gleefully watching MDC ministers struggle with the financial situation. Moyo feared that there could soon be demonstrations and teacher strikes directed at the MDC.

COMMENT

15. (C) Farm seizures and evictions have accelerated since Tsvangirai's inauguration on February 11 due to a combination of factors: ZANU-PF's political tactic of trying to get the MDC to take what may be perceived as an anti-liberation, pro-Western position, a desire to loot machinery and other farm appurtenances; and a last-gasp seizure of farms in the event that rule of law is ultimately restored. The MDC has belatedly addressed this issue (by some estimates only about 100 white farms remain), but we're dubious that ZANU-PF will sincerely cooperate in dealing with the probem.

16. (C) According to the IMF, government reenues are

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sufficient to pay civil service salaries, but inadequate payment mechanisms are preventing this being done in a timely manner. Even if salaries can be paid, there is little left for recurring government expenses and capital investment to improve, for example, the water and energy infrastructure. The MDC is increasingly fearful that ZANU-PF--and more importantly the Zimbabwean people--will blame it for failing to deliver.

DHANANI